

PRESIDENT ATTEMPTS TO USE VETO PEN AS DISTRACTION FROM HIS FISCAL MISMANAGEMENT

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Madam Speaker, last week President Bush tried to label this new Democratic Congress a "do-nothing" Congress. Is he serious? Or did he simply forget that he signed bills into law that were written and passed by this Congress that increased the minimum wage, made college more affordable for millions of children, and made our Nation safer by fully instituting the nonpartisan 9/11 Commission recommendations?

The President is also ignoring the fact that he's vetoed legislation that had strong bipartisan support. We sent him a bill that would insure 10 million children to have quality health care, but he vetoed it.

We sent him another bill that would have allowed for Federal funding of stem cell research so that we can discover cures for diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's; but, again, the President vetoed it.

We also overwhelmingly approved a bill that protects our communities by building and repairing critical flood walls and levees; but, again, last week, the President said no.

This Congress is proud of its accomplishments, but there would be more if the President stopped saying no to progress. Fortunately, today we will override his veto of the water resources bill.

OUR VETERANS DESERVE BETTER

(Ms. GRANGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GRANGER. Madam Speaker, it's been over 140 days since the House passed the MilCon-VA appropriations bill. Already a month into the new fiscal year and we have yet to send a single appropriations bill to the President, including the bill that funds our veterans.

We should have sent the President the MilCon-VA appropriations bill weeks ago when the Senate appointed their conferees, but the Democrat House leadership consistently refused to do so. Our veterans deserve better, and the actions of the majority are completely unacceptable.

House Republicans have been asking for weeks, and we're standing united today, asking the MilCon-VA appropriations bill be sent to the President, standing alone, and not attached to the expensive Labor-HHS appropriations bill. The Labor-HHS bill is \$9.8 billion over the President's request, and the President's been waiting to veto it since it passed the House.

Our veterans deserve better. They shouldn't be used as a political tool for the majority.

Those who have sacrificed so much for their country deserve to be Congress' first priority.

THE TROOPS COME FIRST

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, I had the opportunity about a month ago to visit Iraq. When I did, I traveled on a C-130 with troops into Baghdad and drove in a Humvee through the city with our troops.

While there, I made the decision that I would do everything I could to support the troops. The troops are giving all they can; and because of that, whichever side of the aisle you sit on, you need to support the troops and support the veterans funding bill that's coming before this House, in whatever manner it comes, because the troops come first.

This veterans bill gives veterans the increases in medical care, in benefits for veterans and increases in their pay and increases for the soldiers' salaries that they need. This veterans bill is important.

When we were in Qatar, the general there, General North, said, Do one thing when you go home, don't forget the troops, don't forget the veterans who have been injured, and fund them and fund their veterans bill.

No matter how it is presented, we should support the veterans and vote for the bill.

VETERANS FUNDING

(Mr. CARTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARTER. Madam Speaker, we've had a lot of talk about the veterans, and of course, it's coming up on Veterans Day so we're all going to be talking about the veterans.

We've got an opportunity to do something great. In a bipartisan manner, the MilCon-VA appropriations subcommittee passed out a bill that does great things for our veterans, as our colleagues have said here today.

But now a good bill, and I am blessed to serve on that subcommittee, a good bill is now going to be loaded down with spending pork and we're going to ask our soldiers, once again, to lug extra weight on behalf of the American citizens, and that's just flat wrong.

We need to have a clean bill, by itself, so we can fund the veterans. We're already a month late on doing this process. It's time to get ready, do our job, have a clean, non-loaded-down veterans bill pass out of this House. It's important for our soldiers. They deserve this blessing.

□ 1030

FUNDS FOR OUR VETERANS

(Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, 4 years ago I served in Baghdad, Iraq, with the 82nd Airborne Division, and I am proud of my service.

In 2006, the election was about change: change in Iraq, change here at home, change how we treat our veterans. Well, these are the problems that we addressed in this Congress:

One, the Walter Reed tragedy. Our answer? We passed the Wounded Warrior Act.

Two, underfunding of veterans in past Congresses. Our answer? We passed the largest increase in Veterans Administration history.

Three, the two signature injuries in Iraq and Afghanistan are PTSD, posttraumatic stress disorder and TBI, traumatic brain injury. Our solution in Congress, \$600 million more than the President asked for to address these two injuries.

Later today, this House will take up our bill with Congressman WALTER JONES to give our troops a 3.5 percent pay increase. Don't listen to the rhetoric. The President says that increase is unnecessary. I think it is exactly what this Congress should be addressing.

NEVER PLAY POLITICS WITH FUNDING FOR VETERANS SERVICES

(Mr. SALI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SALI. Madam Speaker, as we approach Veterans Day, it would seem that the funding for the men and women who have served our country faithfully should be a no-brainer; yet, under a new majority of this Congress, the President has yet to send a single appropriations bill, including funding for our veterans.

We shouldn't be on our floor asking that the funds for our veterans be considered on their own merits. That should just be the way that it's done. It is inexcusable to tie funding for our veterans with a Labor-HHS appropriations bill which can best be described as wasteful.

This Congress has drifted far from the priorities of the American people. We should never play politics with funding for veterans services. On Veterans Day, it is fitting that we remember the sacrifices of the brave men and women in uniform and their families and their loved ones.

Our country was founded by courageous patriots. It is sustained by the same kind of people today. Our veterans have done their duty to their country, and it's time that we do ours by providing them with the benefits they are owed.